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Analysis of the organizational structure and the personnel and technical resources of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the United Nations Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

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Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to the General Assembly request contained in paragraph 93 of its resolution 54/249. The report proposes to strengthen the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs through the establishment of one Professional and one General Service post.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/249 by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the administrative and financial issues concerning the Non-Governmental Organizations Section, in particular with regard to the number and level of posts in the Section. In the same resolution, the General Assembly decided, *inter alia*, to reclassify the post of the Chief of the Section to D-1, noted the rapid development of the partnership between the United Nations and the non-governmental organization (NGO) community and recognized the increased workload of the Section.

2. The present report supplements the earlier report on the same subject which was submitted to the General Assembly in November 1999 (A/54/520). The activities of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section and the significant increase in its workload and level of responsibility are described in detail in that report. The information contained in that report is still fully valid and relevant and has not been repeated in the present report. For this reason, the present report deals only with the staffing requirements of the Section.

II. Human resources requirements

3. The staffing resources of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section funded by the regular budget include five Professional (one D-1, two P-4, one P-3 and one P-2) and four General Service posts. In addition, the Section has been utilizing on a regular basis the services of volunteers equivalent to approximately 60 work-months annually, of which 20 are at the Professional and 40 at the General Service level. In order to carry out its programme of work more efficiently and with a view to optimizing the contribution and participation of NGOs in the work of the United Nations, it is considered that the current staff resources of the Section would need to be increased on an annual basis by 12 work-months at the Professional level and 12 work-months at the General Service level.

4. The table below shows how the staff work-months from all sources of funding currently available to the Section and the additional work-months of staff resources needed to carry out the work programme of the Section would be distributed between the main areas of work of the Section on an annual basis.

Activity	*Distribution of human resources currently available to the Non-Governmental Organizations Section by source of funding (in work-months)*				*Utilization of the additional staff resources needed (in work-months)*	
	Regular budget		*Voluntary arrangements*		*Regular budget*	
	P	*GS*	*P*	*GS*	*P*	*GS*
Support to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations	37	27	5	10	8	-
Accreditation of NGOs to United Nations, to preparatory committees and international conferences	6	13	5	20	-	10
Special projects	17	8	10	10	4	2
Total	**60**	**48**	**20**	**40**	**12**	**12**

5. The Non-Governmental Organizations Section has obtained some temporary relief through the redeployment of a P-3 staff member from another area of work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for only a few months in 2000. Efforts to obtain additional relief at the General Service level are still ongoing. The assistance provided to the Section by volunteers or even by regular budget staff on secondment for short periods of time has reached a point beyond which further increases would have a serious negative effect on the work of the Section. Continued heavy reliance on voluntary arrangements and the use of short-term staff would bring further discontinuities and instability as well as a loss of accumulated experience and institutional memory. Such factors are especially important in NGO accreditation work because of precedents and issues that may arise in the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the Economic and Social Council. In order to achieve a better balance between available and required staff resources and between permanent staff and volunteers, **it is proposed to establish one new Professional post at the P-4 level and one new General Service post**. The established staffing table of the Section would then comprise six Professional posts (one D-1, three P-4, one P-3 and one P-2) and five General Service posts.

6. The functions of the P-4 post would involve reviewing and processing new applications from NGOs applying for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and ensuring that they are submitted in accordance with the provisions and guidelines of Council resolution 1996/31; substantive servicing of the Committee on NGOs; assistance in the design of new guidelines and arrangements as part of the outreach programme to facilitate participation of NGOs in the work of the Economic and Social Council and broaden their working relationship with the United Nations system; and support to the launch and implementation of the special projects of the Section, in particular, the establishment of the NGO regional networks, and collaborative projects with the United Nations Development Programme and other organizations of the United Nations system. This will involve work on the design of strategies to develop training plans, programmes and materials with special emphasis on the needs of NGOs in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

7. The General Service post would entail functions largely concerned with updating and maintaining the NGO electronic network as an enhanced technical capacity for using new computer and information systems, to support both outreach

and coordination functions within the NGO section, in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31. Additional functions of the post would include operation of databases integral to the work of the Section, analyses of database requirements and evaluating the adequacy of existing NGO-related information tools. The functions of the post would also entail strengthening the information management and dissemination activities of the Section through the use of modern information technology and assisting in the development of a comprehensive approach to an integrated system regarding the participation of NGOs in the work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies.

III. Conclusion

8. In order to meet the Secretariat mandate of ensuring the contribution and participation of an ever-increasing number of NGOs in the work of the United Nations in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, it is proposed that the Non-Governmental Organizations Section be strengthened through the establishment of one Professional post at the P-4 level and one General Service post. The addition of these two posts would enable the Section to carry out more efficiently its regular workload and special projects (the details of which are contained in chapters II and III of document A/54/520). The two posts would also increase the capacity of the Section to retain its accumulated experience and institutional memory.

9. Should the General Assembly approve the establishment of one P-4 and one General Service post, as of 1 January 2001, additional requirements (costed at rates for new posts) of $105,600 would arise under section 9, Economic and social affairs of the programme budget for 2000-2001. Further additional requirements would also arise under section 32, Staff assessment ($19,300) to be offset by an equivalent amount of $19,300 under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. These requirements would be reflected as a charge to the contingency fund in the context of the first performance report, which will be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.